



NEWS FROM
ULSTER COUNTY
County Executive Jen Metzger

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Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger Appoints Epidemiologist Eve Walter as Director of Public Health, Pending Legislative Confirmation

KINGSTON, NY - Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger has appointed Epidemiologist Eve Walter as Director of Public Health, subject to confirmation by the County Legislature. With an extensive background in epidemiology, preventative healthcare and administrative leadership, she brings to the position a wealth of experience and a profound commitment to person-centered approaches to community health. As a former County Legislator, she also brings to the position a deep knowledge of County government operations and budget. Walter holds a Ph.D. in Epidemiology from SUNY Albany and a Master's in Community Health from the Lehman College Department of Public Health. Her appointment to the position of Public Health Director has been approved by the New York State Commissioner of Health.

Walter is currently Senior Director of Research and Evaluation at AllianceChicago, and Associate Professor of Research at Mount Sinai Icahn School of Medicine. As Senior Director of Research and Evaluation at AllianceChicago, Walter has been responsible for managing a portfolio of 30-35 healthcare research projects totaling more than \$6 million in funding, managing a team of 14, handling strategic planning and partnerships, and working with over 30 medical institutions and the Center for Disease Control on public health initiatives. In her role as Associate Professor of Research, Walter has been responsible for healthcare research and quality improvement in partnership with numerous primary care physicians and nurses annually.

In addition to these roles, Walter has served as a consultant for the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports to address youth risk behaviors. She also served as Assistant Vice President of Population Health/Senior Research Scientist at the Institute for Family

Health, where she spearheaded primary care and population health initiatives around chronic disease management, health disparities, and maternal health. Walter has authored more than 30 academic papers addressing chronic disease, medication adherence, women's health, health disparities, and injury/violence.

Additionally, Walter has valuable experience in County government, having served as an Ulster County Legislator representing New Paltz in 2020-2023, and in legislative leadership roles including Vice Chair of the Legislature in 2022-2023, Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee, and as a representative for NYS Health Committee, both in 2022.

"I am thrilled to appoint Eve Walter as the new Director of Public Health," **said Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger.** "We undertook a rigorous interview and selection process for this important position, and she is clearly the best qualified to lead Ulster County's Public Health Department. With 25 years of experience in the field of health research and evaluation, disparities research, and women's health and gender equity research, her experience will be invaluable as we continue to prioritize the health and wellness of our communities across Ulster County. Her experience in the Legislature and as former Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee will be an asset to the job, as she comes into this leadership role with considerable knowledge of the Department she will oversee as well as County operations and budget more generally."

The County Executive instituted an extensive selection process for this important position, with four rounds of interviews, including input from representatives of the Ulster County Board of Health and County Departments that work closely with the Health Department.

"I am honored and humbled by the opportunity to further serve Ulster County, drawing from my decades of work in public health locally, regionally and nationally," **said Dr. Eve Walter.** "I am committed to dedicating myself to the health and wellbeing of all residents in our great County through expanded outreach and services."

Walter earned her Ph.D. in Epidemiology from the University at Albany, focusing on social factors affecting health outcomes. She has worked at the NYC Department of Health and SUNY, publishing the book *Epidemiological Criminology* in 2013. At SUNY New Paltz's Benjamin Center, she collaborated with health organizations on projects like youth substance use and mental health assessments. Throughout her career, she has partnered with the Centers for Disease Control, the National Association of Community Health Centers, the National Institute of Health, and academic and community partners to reduce health disparities and improve patient care.

Walter, who holds a Public Health Doctorate Degree, replaces Commissioner of Health Dr. Carol Smith, who retired earlier this year. In May 2024, the Legislature voted to approve a change to the Ulster County Charter to align the requirements for the position with New York State Public Health Law, which allows for a County Department of Health to be overseen by either a Director, with a health-related Master’s Degree, or a Commissioner, certified to practice medicine. The charter previously required a medical doctor to serve in that position.

Walter’s confirmation is expected to be considered at the October session of the County Legislature.

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